

Christmas Wishes

By S. B. HACKLEY

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OR many minutes on the afternoon that Robertson & Co. marked down their "window suits" to \$25. Iva Ellsworth, Elsie Banford's visitor, watched from Elsie's sympathetic eyes a little lame woman who stood before the window and directly in front of a navy blue coat suit of "chiffon broadcloth."

Delmar Halstead stood at the side of the car with his back to the sidewalk and his eyes on Iva's face. He had made excuse to leave his bookkeeper's desk when he had seen Elsie come in the store and leave her guest alone in the car, so he did not see the little lame woman.

"I wish," said the girl irrelevantly, "everybody could have their dearest Christmas wishes!"

Halstead's smile was a bit wistful. "I echo your heavenly kind thought—"



Iva Ellsworth Was the Dixie Rose.

I've a big wish for Christmas myself. "Something pretty or useful?"

"It's pretty, useful and good—everything that's lovely and desirable."

Iva's eyes were on the package in her lap, but she felt that he was looking at her in unconscious appraisal, and her pulse leaped.

"Tell me about it Christmas evening, I mean," she added a little confusedly, "whether you get it or not."

"Indeed I will!" he promised.

Miss Adriana Halstead, elderly and somewhat neglected by her only relatives—her dead brother's family—gave a glad little cry when she saw her older nephew in her door that evening. Delmar felt a little prick of conscience as he kissed her. For a few moments the little woman fluttered about him happily, then set about preparing the evening meal, she insisted he must share. While she was out of the room Delmar accidentally dropped his fountain pen in her wastebasket.

As he fished it out, absently smoothing the sheets of crumpled note paper in which it fell, his eyes caught in his aunt's cramped scrawl: "To Mrs. Miriam Halstead, My Mother in Heaven." Wondering, he read on: "Everybody but me is thinking of Christmas wishes—gifts possible for them to have—and oh, mother darling, I must tell someone what I know I cannot have, or my heart will break!

"I want somebody of my people to sit at my table to laugh and to talk with me, to live with me and love me! In the four years since you and father went away I've been lonely—lonely!"

"I could not bear it if it were not for Delmar. When he is here I play he lives with me, and I forget for a blessed hour or so I am alone. And oh, mother, my roses are going unpruned, my fence untrimmed and my house unpainted, and my clothes are getting shabbier every day. I am afraid they will soon not be respectable enough for church. Oh, little mother, I want a new dress. I want—oh, mother, ought I to covet that coat suit in Robertson & Co.'s window—the blue French broadcloth that would just fit me!"

The words ended here. The writer had evidently crumpled the paper and thrown it in the basket when she heard his ring.

When Delmar went home he walked by the corner and looked at the blue suit. Twenty-five dollars represented an engagement ring if Iva Ellsworth would accept it. Iva lived with her cousins in the next state and was used to luxury, and his bookkeeper's salary was only \$75 a month, but Delmar had resolved.

broadcloth suit of the window display. Like one in a happy daze Miss Adriana put on the things and presently Delmar came in wearing his evening clothes.

Would she go with him to see the play the young people of the town were giving, "A Rose of Old Dixie."

With her face like the dawn Miss Adriana watched the play. Iva Ellsworth was the Dixie Rose, a witching heroine; Paul Nelson, her lover, Iva played her part with brilliancy, but Paul's heart prompted his acting. It was fervent, real.

Delmar's mind was torn with indecision. But near the end of the play he looked at the little lonely woman beside him, for the time pathetically happy, and quite suddenly his mind was made up.

"Auntie," he said abruptly to her when they were again in her living room, "will you let me come live with you? Mother doesn't need me; she's going to be married soon to Dr. Ashley Wyatt. We'd be company for each other. If you'll let me I'll move my desk and other things over tomorrow."

Miss Adriana's happiness of the evening, compared with the new joy, was as a drop of water to the ocean.

That evening Iva Ellsworth received a bouquet of pink carnations and a note that asked her to pardon the writer for breaking his promise to call, and begging her to accept his congratulations on the success of the play.

"I didn't get what I wanted for Christmas," the note ended. "I didn't dare, in the face of things, to ask for it."

For several months the world held no happier creature than Miss Adriana. Then she observed that Delmar had occasional fits of abstractedness, unnatural to him. Gradually it dawned upon her that he was troubled over something.

"Where is that pretty Ellsworth girl now, Del, do you know?" she asked him tentatively one morning early in December.

He started at her question, and she noticed with a sinking heart that the paper he had shook a little.

"Bryce Garth told me yesterday Paul Nelson was married," he answered her, "and though Bryce didn't know to whom, I—I think it must be to Miss Ellsworth, auntie."

Later in the day, searching for a lost cuff button of Delmar's, she came upon a picture of the girl.

"He loved her—he gave up asking her to marry him," her troubled mind reasoned, "to make a home for me. And now he is grieving for her!"

As the weeks passed Miss Adriana paled under the weight of her secret trouble. Delmar became uneasy for her, and a few days before Christmas sent her to the near-by city to see one of his friends, a fine young physician there.

That afternoon while crossing the street to the railroad station Miss Adriana felt herself caught and pulled back just in time to escape being run over by a heavy truck that came around the corner. The girl who saved her helped her to the ladies' sitting room of the station, but when her train came a few minutes later she was too shaken and nervous to attempt to board it.

"Oh, what will Delmar think when I don't come!" she exclaimed.

"Delmar!" The pretty girl's cheeks grew a deeper pink, and Miss Adriana knew her to be Iva Ellsworth. "My nephew, Delmar Halstead, with whom I live in Review," she explained, "Why, Review is only twenty-five miles," cried the girl; "I'll telephone him and he can come for you in an automobile."

When she came back Miss Adriana's lips trembled over a question.

"Are you—are you married, my dear?"

When Delmar came Miss Adriana was able to smile in wan gaiety at him.

"Where is the lady that saved you?" he asked presently as he knelt beside



"Delmar, You've Misjudged Me!"

her with his arms about her. "I don't know how I'll ever thank that blessed woman!"

Miss Adriana took his face between her hands. "Delmar," she said, "she told me her dearest wish for Christmas was a home! She has a little money of her own, but Delmar, three people could live on what we two do, in comfort, in real comfort. I—oh, Delmar, I want her to come and live with us!"

Before Delmar could speak the inner door opened and Iva Ellsworth came in.

"I know now why you didn't ask for what you wanted last Christmas!" she said softly. "Delmar Halstead, how you've misjudged me! Plain living, with love, and this dear woman in mother law, would be rich to me!"

KEPT HER AWAKE

The Terrible Pains in Back and Sides, Cardui Gave Relief.

Marksville, La.—Mrs. Alice Johnson, of this place, writes: "For one year I suffered with an awful misery in my back and sides. My left side was hurting me all the time. The misery was something awful."

"I could not do anything, not even sleep at night. It kept me awake most of the night. I took different medicines, but nothing did me any good or relieved me until I took Cardui. . . ."

"I was not able to do any of my work for one year and I got worse all the time, was confined to my bed off and on. I got so bad with my back that when I stooped down I was not able to straighten up again. . . . I decided I would try Cardui. . . . By time I had taken the entire bottle I was feeling pretty good and could straighten up and my pains were nearly all gone."

"I shall always praise Cardui. I continued taking it until I was strong and well." If you suffer from pains due to female complaints, Cardui may be just what you need. Thousands of women who once suffered in this way now praise Cardui for their present good health. Give it a trial.

CRIMINAL WASTE.
By Dr. FRANK CRANE.

The curse of this country is extravagance.

We are the most wasteful folk on earth.

We won the war on a program of reckless, unlimited, mountainous waste.

So that the government might waste gigantically, and wholesale, individuals skimped and saved a while during the war pressure. But as soon as the armistice was signed we went at our favorite sport again, throwing money hilariously out of the window, dumping it into the garbage can and making bonfires of twenty dollar bills in the back yard, so to speak.

Workmen, getting fatter pay than they ever had in their lives, did not save it, but started out to buy talking machines, new rugs, better clothes for ma and the girls and a fiver for all. And the rich outpaced them. There is more idiotic plain damfool spending going on right now than ever before.

Luxuries are in greater demand now than ever before in the history of the United States. Diamonds, linens, furs, expensive furs and silk shirts are selling faster than dealers can get them.

"People who bought fur coats worth \$250 before the war spent as much as \$500 for them now," said a fur dealer. "That does not merely signify that prices have gone up; it means that people are willing to pay for a higher class article. And we are selling five times as many fur coats as before."

"What is more, people will pay spot cash. It used to be necessary to sell furs on credit; now the buyer seems to have the money. Most of the time he is a man who never would have thought of buying such a thing in the old days."

The demand for jewelry is far in advance of the supply, according to F. C. Backus, secretary of the National Jewelers' Board of Trade.

"Everybody wants platinum jewelry," said Mr. Backus. "We can't find enough large and expensive stones to fill the orders that come in."

Why not? If they have the money may they not do as they please with it?

A thousand times—NO.

You have a legal right to light your cigar with a thousand dollar bill. But if you do so you are a criminal waster in the eyes of any right-minded person.

Think of the sheer wickedness of it, when there are eleven million children in the United States without schooling.

When vast populations in Europe and Asia are starving and freezing.

When thousands of human lives around you might be strengthened and brightened by the money that goes into your furs, diamonds and linens!

There's something rotten in a people that can waste joyously, without a qualm of conscience.

To say nothing of its viciousness, how disgusting it is!

You didn't think? You didn't realize? You never knew?

Didn't you ever read Thomas Hood's poem, where the dying wastrel rich man says:

"The wounds I might have healed,
The human sorrow and mart!
And yet it was never in my mind
To play so ill a part!
But evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as by want of heart!"

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

Wm. S. Pearson, well known citizen of Morganton, and a graduate of Princeton, died at the home of his son in Charlotte the latter part of last week.

Santa's Red Guide

By R. RAY BAKER

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HE tall, rawboned sailor stopped whistling when he saw the automobile, although his lips remained pursed and vapor continued to pour before his mouth.

He halted midway between the fog-bell and the lighthouse, and stamped his feet energetically on the beaten snow path, for they were cold in spite of heavy overshoes.

"Ben Clark's automobile," he said, and he did not say it joyfully. "He's callin' on Marie ag'in."

The door of the dwelling part of the lighthouse opened and a young man, dressed in a fur coat, came out, placing a cap, also of fur, on his head. He paused when he saw the sailor.

"Merry Christmas," said the fur-clad one, grinning, and he passed on to the automobile, climbed in, and soon was whirling away.

"Same to yuh," sang out the sailor, although he scowled as he approached the door through which the other had



A Light Shone Forth Into the Winter Night.

emerged. "Seems he's gettin' in a hurry about it. Christmas don't come till tomorrow."

There was nothing about the sailor to denote that he was a seafaring man, unless it was his rolling gait, for he was huddled up much as the other man, although his coat, instead of being fur, was an old fuzzy blue one.

Navigation had closed some months ago, because a large share of the lake had an icy blanket, and Harry Hammond was obliged to find other pursuits till spring. So he fished through the ice and helped keep the village of Bennett supplied with food.

His knock was answered by a dark-eyed girl of three years, who smiled brightly.

"Hello, Emeline," he said, and he took her in his arms and asked her about Santa and what she expected the old gentleman from the North to bring her.

"Big doll's what I want," she told him, trying to spill the part in his hair, and falling because there was not any there to begin with. "Dat's all—just big doll."

From the adjoining room came another dark-eyed girl of nineteen sniffling her hands on an apron.

Harry placed the tot on the floor, and as he did so he discovered a picture standing on the table. It was of a very good looking young man.

"I see Mr. Clark left a present," Harry said, and immediately wished he had kept his thoughts to himself, for the girl flared up.

"Yes," she said with a tinge of defiance. "Ben Clark left me his picture. I hope you don't object."

The sailor studied the blue pattern in the faded red carpet.

"Wouldn't do much good if I did," he responded. "You an' he's gettin' pretty thick, Marie. I thought things was pretty well understood between you an' me—but that was before Ben commenced takin' you ridin' and shinin' up to you. A man with a car certainly does have an advantage over us poor guys."

Marie's cheeks grew red-tapped her foot.

"Look here, Harry she said in a voice that a ringmaster's whip crack nor no man is going to die. Mr. Clark has been very nice he's a highly refined gentleman—you—well, you're not, and you're not."

Ben turned toward the door. "Mebbe I better step out o' it g'ather," he observed.

He opened the door and was all to step out, when Emeline sprang in his arms. He kissed the child on the forehead, then put her back on the floor and went out, remarking to himself that "this sure is some merry Christmas."

That afternoon a storm that had been brewing for days vented its spite on the village and its surroundings, which included Clayton Point and the lighthouse. A raw, stiff wind carried biting pieces of hard snow.

elder girl and listened to the howling wind.

"Probably not," replied Marie, who was gazing abstractedly from the living room window out over the frozen lake.

Marie was quite sure Santa would not come. Santa would have to be her brother Frank, who was Emeline's father, and he was at Sloan City, 20 miles away, helping an ice company put up next summer's supply. He had promised to bring something for Emeline's Christmas, but Marie knew he would not attempt the trip in the storm.

Frank was the lightkeeper and the government records showed Marie to be his assistant. Frank kept the light burning during the summer and in the winter found jobs of various kinds to perform.

About five o'clock, through the storm, Marie heard an automobile horn, and presently came a knock on the door. Ben Clark, blanketed with snow, stood there when she opened it.

"I can't stay," he said, "or I won't be able to drive back, because the road is drifting badly. I came because I heard some news you'll be interested in. Harry Hammond went out on the ice this morning with his dog team, and up at the village a fisherman just came in with the news that the ice had cracked and part of it went out. Hammond didn't have a chance in a thousand, especially in this storm. He surely must have drowned."

Marie started back, horror in her eyes.

"Harry drowned!" she cried. "It doesn't seem possible. Are you sure? Can't you do something? Take me out on the ice in your car. Perhaps he's still alive, lying somewhere on the ice freezing. The ice must be firm for a long ways out."

"What?" exclaimed Ben. "Go out there in this howling blizzard? The ice might hold up for a long ways, but I'd ruin the car and we'd stand a good chance of getting pneumonia, if we didn't get lost and wander into open water."

Early that night the villagers were startled to see a red bar of light shoot from Clayton Point. It was the first time in history that that light, which had guided many a ship through summer gales, had shone forth into a winter night.

Up in the light tower stood Marie looking through the great glass wall, striving to pierce the darkness and stern with eyes that were red from weeping.

"There's not much hope," she mused, "but there's just a chance he's still alive and the old light might help him."

For hours she remained at the post, watching and waiting, all but hopeless. Midnight found her asleep in a chair close by the light, exhausted by her long vigil.

A scream from below made her wide awake. She stumbled down the stairs and groped her way to Emeline's room. To her surprise a lamp was burning and there was Emeline seated on the bed, bouncing a doll, fully as large as herself, on her knee.

"Santa came!" cried the little girl, and now Marie realized that it had been a scream of joy that awakened her.

"Santa came!" repeated the tot. "I found this right on my bed."

Unable to understand, Marie went out into the living room and lighted a

others. You like children and you like to hear them laugh and you work for them all the year. You're their King, King Santa Claus, and you're my master."

So Boy of the North tried to talk to Santa Claus and Santa Claus understood. He stroked the dog's head, and as he smiled, looking into the fireplace, he said:

"It was a wonderful trip, Boy of the North. I love to sit down here in my easy chair on Christmas day and think about it. Oh, I saw so many lovely children. They were asleep and such nice smiles were playing around their mouths. I hoped, Boy of the North, they were thin because I like to see them."

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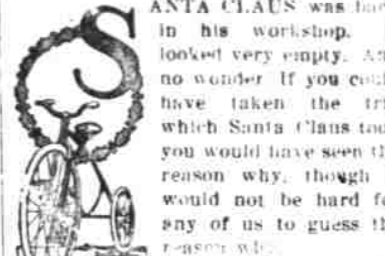
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Santa's Christmas Day

By MARY GRAHAM BONNER

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SANTA CLAUS was back in his workshop. It looked very empty. And no wonder if you could have taken the trip which Santa Claus took you would have seen the reason why, though it would not be hard for any of us to guess the reason why.

Santa Claus on the night before Christmas had stopped at the toy stores and had taken the toys which he had left there so that the children could see them and write letters telling what they wanted.

By that time he had packs and packs of toys as many as his sleigh could hold, and while his workshop was empty there was a nice, cheerful appearance about it.

There were lots of tools around, however, and there were bits of cloth left from making dresses and hats for dollies, and there were little ends of ribbons which had tied packages. There were pieces of wood, too, which had been sawed off when boats were made.

There were many other things, which showed it had been a toy shop. It looked as if it had been full of toys only a little while before—and not only toys but of every sort of a Christmas present for every sort of a child.

A fire was burning cheerfully in the big stove and was making the workshop nice and warm. But there was an open fire, too, at the end of the shop with a big chair in front of it.

On a rug beside the chair sat Boy of the North, his head against the knee of Santa Claus.

He was wagging his tail from time to time and looking into his master's eyes.

"Good old Boy of the North, never forgets his master!" said Santa Claus. And Boy of the North was happy that Santa Claus was so pleased by the warm wrapper and slippers which he had got for his master.

"Good old Boy of the North," said Santa Claus again, patting him, and Boy of the North snuffed the air, and looked at Santa Claus as though to say:

"Who wouldn't be good if he belonged to you? You're always cheerful and happy and always thinking of



"I Look at Children All Over the World."

others. You like children and you like to hear them laugh and you work for them all the year. You're their King, King Santa Claus, and you're my master."

So Boy of the North tried to talk to Santa Claus and Santa Claus understood. He stroked the dog's head, and as he smiled, looking into the fireplace, he said:

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